

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended.

No new matter is added.

**I. Allowable Subject Matter**

The Office Action indicates that claims 2, 3 and 5-9 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant appreciates this indication of allowability and submits that all pending claims are allowable for the reasons discussed below.

**II. Rejection of the Claims**

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Saito, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0040232 A1 in view of Yanagihara et al. (Yanagihara), JP 03-023327. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Saito fails to disclose or suggest in all operating ranges where the amount of intake air is larger than the predetermined value, the engine is operated with a variable lean A/F ratio which increases from the fixed A/F ratio as the amount of intake air increases, as recited in claim 1. Saito teaches decreasing the A/F ratio at high loads (where the amount of intake air is larger than the predetermined value  $b_2$ ) and actually teaches a rich A/F ratio when the intake air pressure reaches a high level, i.e., in the range E4 (Fig. 5; paragraphs [0094] and [0096]). Thus, Saito fails to disclose or suggest in all operating ranges where the amount of intake air is larger than the predetermined value, the engine is operated with a variable lean A/F ratio which increases from the fixed A/F ratio as the amount of intake air increases, as recited in claim 1.

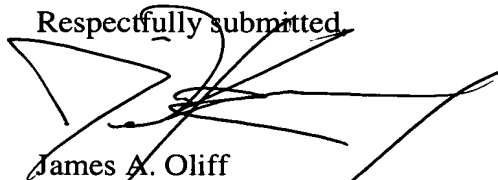
Yanagihara fails to account for the deficiency of Saito with respect to claim 1. Thus, the combination of Saito and Yanagihara fails to disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in claim 1. Because claim 4 incorporates the features of claim 1, the

combination of Saito and Yanagihara also fails to disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in claim 4. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

**III. Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-9 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
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Date: September 27, 2006

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